

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 06567 261657Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6567

NODIS

DELIVER AT 0800 TO EA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE AND
EA/K DIRECTOR RICH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PDIP, KS, US

SUBJ: MORE ON KIM DONG JO

REF: A) SEOUL 6352, (1.A) 6293, (B) SEOUL 6427, (C) SEOUL 6484, (D)
SEOUL 6531, (E) STATE 187448

1. SUMMARY : I REVIEWED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WHY SPEAKER
O'NEILL WISHED TO HAVE PRESIDENT PARK SEE HIS EMISSARIES
OR AT LEAST MEET WITH ME SO I COULD PERSONALLY DELIVER THE
SPEAKER'S LETTER AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR IT. THE PRIME
MINISTER SAID IT WOULD BE MOST DIFFICUT FOR ME TO SEE THE
PRESIDENT BECAUSE OF HIS ABSENCE FROM SEOUL, BUT ASSURED
ME THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD READ THE SPEAKER'S LETTER AND WAS
FULLY BRIEFED ON OUR EXPLANATIONS. HE REVIEWED THE KOREAN
POSITION, EMPHASIZING THAT THE DOOR WAS OPEN, THAT THE ROKG
WISHED TO RESOLVE THE KIM DONG JO AFFAIR, AND THAT THE
KOREANS WERE WAITING FOR A US COUNTERPROPOSAL FROM THE
SPEAKER. THE PRIME MINISTER PROMISED TO CONSIDER THE
POSSIBILITY OF A KOREAN INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. I USED MY LONG COURTESY CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER TO
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URGE A CHANGE IN THE KOREAN POSTURE ON KIM DONG JO AND TO
REVIEW MY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER
(REFS A, 1.A. AND B), PRESIDENT PARK (REF C) AND CHOI KWANG SOO
(REF D). I REMINDED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT I HAD NOT
BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE PRESIDENT AGAIN BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE
FROM SEOUL AND I HAD BEEN FORCED TO CONVEY A NEGATIVE MESSAGE
WHICH WASHINGTON FOUND MOST UNSATISFACTORY. AS A RESULT, I

HAD BEEN AGAIN INSTRUCTED BY THE SECRETARY TO SEE PRESIDENT PARK TO ENSURE THAT HE READ THE LETTER FROM THE SPEAKER AND MR RHODES AND UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS BEHIND THE REQUEST.

3. PRIME MINISTER CHOI SAID HE REGRETTED THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE FOR ME TO SEE THE PRESIDENT BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR CHINHAE BECAUSE IT WOULD BE MOST DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL VACATION. HOWEVER, HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD READ THE SPEAKER'S LETTER AND HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY BRIEFED ON OUR VIEWS BEFORE DECIDING THAT IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO RECEIVE THE CONGRESSMEN AT THIS TIME. THE PRIME MINISTER WENT ON TO REITERATE THE ROKG POSITION AS FOLLOWS: THE ROKG UNDERSTOOD THE DANGERS OF A FAILURE TO RESOLVE THE KIM DONG JO AFFAIR AND WISHED TO FIND A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE WAY TO CLOSE OUT A MATTER WHICH HAD DONE SO MUCH HARM TO US-ROK RELATIONS. NOTING MY COMMENTS ABOUT THE DAMAGE TO AMERICAN ATTITUDES, HE POINTED OUT THAT KOREANS FOR THEIR PART WERE PUZZLED AND BOTHERED BY THE US POSITION AND THAT A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROCESS WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT KOREAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE US. THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HAD OFFERED TO BEGIN THE PROCESS WITH A PHONE CALL FROM KIM DONG JO TO THE SPEAKER AND TO FOLLOW THIS UP WITH A WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM KIM TO QUESTIONS POSED BY MR JAWORSKI OR THE ETHICS COMMITTEE. THE ROKG COULD NOT FORCE THE FORMER AMBASSADOR TO RESPOND OR MAKE ANY FORMAL GUARANTEE AS TO WHAT HE WOULD SAY, BUT IT CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD ENCOURAGE HIM TO DO HIS UTMOST TO HELP THE CONGRESS. IF THIS PROPOSAL WAS UNSATISFACTORY, THE ROKG WAS PREPARED TO CONSIDER AN AMERICAN COUNTERPROPOSAL. IN CONCLUSION HE STRESSED THAT THE DOOR WAS OPEN AND THE KOREAN POSITION WAS NOT INFLEXIBLE.

4. I REVIEWED AT LENGTH WHY IT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO THE SPEAKER THAT PRESIDENT PARK RECEIVE HIS EMISSARIES OR AT LEAST RECEIVE ME TO HEAR ME OUT. NEVERTHELESS, I RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE PRESIDENT'S ABSENCE. MAKING VERY CLEAR THAT MY INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO SEE THE PRESIDENT, I THEN WENT ON TO URGE THAT IF THIS PROVED IMPOSSIBLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, I THOUGHT IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT TAKE SOME INITIATIVE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE SPEAKER AND THE CONGRESS THAT THE ROKG WAS SERIOUS ABOUT WANTING TO COOPERATE AND TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE PROMPTLY. WE UNDERSTOOD KOREAN UNWILLINGNESS TO PERMIT KIM DONG JO TO TESTIFY DIRECTLY BEFORE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS, AND WE ALSO APPRECIATED THEIR RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT THE DEVICE OF SWORN TESTIMONY. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS COMPLETELY REASONABLE FOR CONGRESS TO WANT SOME ADVANCE ASSURANCE THAT KIM DONG JO WOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN HIS RESPONSES. I REFERRED

BACK TO THE FONMIN'S COMMENTS TO ME (REFA A, 1.A, AND B) THAT IF THE CONGRESS PROVIDED QUERIES TO KIM DONG JO, THE ROKG WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO RESPOND IN A SERIOUS MANNER IN CONTRAST TO HIS PRO FORMA DISMISSAL OF THE ISSUE IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH NEWSWEEK. I ASKED WHETHER KOREAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT THINK OF SOME WAY TO UNDERScore THIS POINT AND TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE RATHER THAN WAITING FOR FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FROM WASHINGTON.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER COMMENTED THAT HE HAD FOUND OUR CONVERSATION USEFUL. THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS WHY IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ANY FURTHER INITIATIVE; I.E., CRITICISM IN THE KOREAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STEPS TAKEN SO FAR, THE FACT THAT KIM DON JO WAS NO LONGER
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SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT INSTRUCTION AND THE UNHELPFUL ROLE OF CRITICAL PUBLICITY IN THE US. NEVERTHELESS, HE WOULD THINK ABOUT WHAT I HAD SAID AND WOULD CALL BACK THE FONMIN FROM FACATION TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE WITH ME.

6. COMMENT: THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS KNOW THAT I HAVE STANDING INSTRUCTIONS TO TRY TO SEE THE PRESIDENT AND I WILL KEEP REMINDING ALL CONCERNED THAT THIS IS THE CASE. EVEN THOUGH AN EARLY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE, I WILL USE THIS FACT AND ALL OTHER ARGUMENTS TO GET ACROSS TO THE KOREANS THE MESSAGE THAT THEY MUST TAKE AN INITIATIVE AND HELP THE CONGRESS.
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